

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **REPS. MARKEY, MEEHAN, TIERNEY RELEASE STATEMENT ON NATICK LABS AND HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE**

*Lawmakers Statement Submitted at Today's Regional Hearing of Base  
Realignment and Closure Commission*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Representatives Edward J. Markey (MA-7), Martin T. Meehan (MA-5), and John F. Tierney (MA-6), today released the following testimony for the record to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission Regional Field Hearing. Today's hearing will provide New England stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the Pentagon's list of military installations recommended for realignment and/or closure (known as the BRAC list), which was announced on May 13, 2005. The list will be forwarded to President Bush for his review no later than September 8, and Congress will vote on the list in its entirety in the Fall.

"We would like to thank you, Chairman Principi, and members of the Commission for holding this regional hearing in Boston. We welcome the opportunity to submit testimony as you continue your deliberations about the future structure of the United States Armed Forces. We represent the towns surrounding Hanscom Air Force Base (AFB) – Rep. Markey (Lexington and Lincoln); Rep. Meehan (Concord); and Rep. Tierney (Bedford). In addition, Rep. Markey represents the Natick Army Soldier Systems Center (SSC).

Given the vital importance to our national defense of Hanscom AFB and Natick SSC, we are pleased that the Pentagon's recommendations rightfully recognized the military value of Hanscom and Natick. The proposal to realign five organizations to Hanscom and preserve nearly all of the functions at Natick SSC reflects an understanding of the fact that the experienced workforce and the complex work that occurs at these installations cannot be easily or effectively replicated elsewhere.

Enduring partnerships with nearby academic centers and a cluster of cross-service, cutting edge, defense technology entities have helped Hanscom AFB and Natick SSC become such critical technical research assets. The presence of an unparalleled workforce serves as the engine behind the thriving industries and institutions that support Hanscom and Natick. The strength of the technology cluster in our

region helped Natick SSC earn the number one ranking in military value for both Human Systems Research and Human Systems Development and Acquisition by the Technical Joint Cross Service Group. Both Hanscom and Natick earned several top ten rankings in other Technical Joint Cross Service Group categories.

We are concerned, therefore, that the decision to realign the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) at Hanscom by relocating the Sensors Directorate to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, and the Space Vehicles Directorate and Geophysics Lab to Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico may be inconsistent with aspects of the Pentagon's analysis of Hanscom, and could disrupt key programs. For instance, Hanscom scored highly across key Development and Acquisition (D&A) areas, including sensors, electronics, and electronic warfare. Additionally, as the AFRL components at Hanscom Air Force Base draw heavily upon regional human capital capabilities in science and technology, the proposed relocation of the Sensors and Space Vehicles Directorates appear to carry significant costs with few gains. It may prove virtually impossible to reconstitute the seismic work of the Geophysics Lab at another location, and a previously attempted transfer of the Lab's mission in 1997 was overturned in 2003 at the urging of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation and the Nuclear Threat Monitoring Group within the Air Force Technical Applications Center with the full support of the Air Force.

We understand that internal polls of employees at these Directorates and past BRAC rounds suggest that less than 20% of professionals currently employed in the Directorates would be likely to relocate, should Hanscom AFRL's Sensors and Space Vehicles Directorates be moved in accordance with the Department of Defense's proposals. Without access to a similar strong employee base, the AFRL mission may be negatively and unnecessarily impacted.

We respectfully request that you re-examine the Pentagon's analysis as it relates to the Sensors and Space Vehicles Directorates and appropriately weigh the difficulty of reconstituting the formidable intellectual and business cluster that exists in Massachusetts, as well as the value of the highly skilled workforce currently serving at these Directorates' facilities at Hanscom.

Finally, we want to add our voices in support of Massachusetts workers and our colleagues U.S. Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John Kerry, and U.S. Representatives William Delahunt (MA-10) and Stephen Lynch (MA-9), as well as Governor Mitt Romney, in their efforts to have the Commission reexamine the recommendations of the Department of Defense with respect to the Otis Air National Guard Base, and the Naval Shipyard Puget Sound – Boston Detachment.

We appreciate the challenging task confronting you as you work toward a final recommendation. We thank you for your service and for your time and attention to our concerns.”